



# WALTON RELATIONS

Volume 2, Issue 6

Walton County Genealogy Society

May 2011

## Help Us Help You

The Walton County Genealogy Society has a variety of resources available on our website (with more updates coming) and we produce this newsletter ten times a year, but we need to know how else we might help you in your quest to discover your heritage.

The "History Detectives" e-newsletters have been helpful with answering queries, and you are welcome to submit yours. If you are not receiving those newsletters, send us an email indicating you would like to receive it.

We are grateful for the excellent articles our readers submit, and we invite everyone to submit items. Nothing is too small or insignificant. If you have found a resource that helped you tremendously, please let us know so that we can pass the tip along to others.

If you belong to other genealogy societies that offer helpful services, please let us know about them. If you are stuck and need some help or advice, please ask.

## WCGS Meeting

Our meeting on **Saturday, May 14**, will be a joint meeting with the Genealogy Society of Okaloosa County. We will meet at the **Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, 115 Westview Avenue, Valparaiso, at 10:00 AM.**

**Wayne Sconiers** will demonstrate how to make a DVD with Windows Movie Maker using your photographs, video clips, and music. Much of our research crosses the county lines, so this joint meeting will be a great opportunity to meet and share genealogy ideas and information with others researching some of the same family lines you are.



### **Walton County Heritage Museum**

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 1:00- 4:00 PM  
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

850-951-2127

[www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org](http://www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org)

[WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net](mailto:WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net)

# Using Information from Extracted Newspapers

By Mary Ellen Wexler

When a friend and I started extracting items from old newspapers, we decided we would make sure all the names we found would be extracted. If nothing else, it gives one a timeline or points to friends or possible relatives. Names appearing together can indicate either relationship or friendship. Either case may give you a clue as to where to look for someone you may have "lost." In some cases, it is almost as good as walking through a cemetery and finding that the "Aunt Mary" you have been seeking for many years is in the plot next to her parents but her last name is Smith while her parents are Jones.

**An example:** The friend I was working with pulled out a jewel from an early newspaper, solving a more than 20 year-old mystery. The bit she found while typing a 1905 DeFuniak Springs paper, was "Mrs. Jenny Whitehead of Mossy Head is in town visiting her brother George Edge who has been ill this week" (or something very similar). We then had a year in which we knew where she lived **and** her married name. We looked in the census, marriage, land, and cemetery records and added the information we found.

Born Jane Edge and last found in the 1850 Barbour County, Alabama, census, the youngest daughter of Jesse L. Edge was an enigma. Jenny was not a name we would have been looking for even though it is often a nickname for "Jane." Also, we had no idea who she had married or where they went afterward. We thought she may have died. The only clue we had was where the rest of her siblings had established homes. If you have been looking for a missing female relative, you will know the frustration we felt. The small line from the Crestview reporter to the DeFuniak Springs paper was such a wonderful find. My friend e-mailed me the line and, in less than half an hour and using Internet sources and material we already had in hand, we solved our ancient mystery. George Edge was the documented brother of Jane Edge, and Jenny Whitehead's age and birth place matched in census records we found.

Other information we had from family letters corroborated our findings. Jenny was buried in the Mossy Head cemetery and next to her was her granddaughter Suzie Mitchem. Finding census records had led us to her children and the marriage of her daughter Eliza to Riley Mitchem. A letter from my great uncle had mentioned the "Mitchem relatives" at the time of my great grandfather's death. Not only did we find this woman and her children, but we solved the mystery of where my great grandfather had been buried. Family lore had it that he was buried in Mossy Head cemetery "at the foot of his aunt." We were never told who the aunt was but, having found her, we realized what the answer was to that question as well. As there are many unmarked graves in the cemetery, we were never able to find the real gravesite, but the cemetery committee allowed us to erect a marker for my great grandfather in the same plot. My mother was truly grateful that we had letters backing up our theory and that the committee was so nice in letting us erect the stone.

**Back to the transcription process.** We also pulled out names from other places so a researcher might learn something of the friends or possible relatives of their Florida folks. Often we cannot find where an ancestor came from, but a hint might be in the local news bits. Perhaps you read James Roberts from Pittsburgh was visiting relatives in DeFuniak Springs. You know your Mary Roberts married Robert Graves and was living in DeFuniak Springs, but you couldn't find where she had lived before that. You also know she had a brother named James, so you may begin looking for her family in Pennsylvania. You may not be able to find them because James moved there from elsewhere, but James' movements will be easier to follow than Mary's are. One must be aware of the timeline when doing this sort of detective work, however.

Land and court records are important as witnesses in land records are usually either some kind of kin or close neighbors. Court records give you a timeline as well as possible familial or business connections. Sometimes they give you a woman's married name. The homestead records (notice of which must be published in the local papers three consecutive times) are great resources and give you a glimpse into how and where your ancestors lived as well as who their neighbors were. Missing female relatives are often found to have married someone living close by and can turn up while pursuing clues obtained from these records.

Advertisements give one a timeline as well as a glimpse into the way a family lived. If one finds a business quits advertising at a particular time, one may wish to look for a movement of the family, death of the proprietor, or other major events around that time. Investigating business partners can give you valuable information about your ancestor. Legal records may help in this instance as well.

On occasion, we would type out interesting bits just to show price ranges, political or moral thoughts of the times, or items explaining something we had heard about. I typed the bit about the Florala Chautauqua because I had been told my grandmother had gone to a Chautauqua by wagon, and I thought that getting to DeFuniak Springs from Boggy might not have been as easy as traveling to another venue. There were a number of Chautauquas held in this region, and she likely went to one closer or easier to get to in the very early 1900s when roads were scarce and rivers hard to cross at times.

Fortunately, bound copies of the DeFuniak Springs newspapers are available so the hints transcribed from them may be more thoroughly investigated. You may go to the Walton County Courthouse to view them and, while you are there, you can look for land and legal records to back up any ideas you may have formulated from the news bits you read.

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## **Free Genealogy Classes Online**

Below are some of the free courses that are offered online, all of which are self-paced so you can complete them at your leisure. Many of the topics are basic, but you might pick up a tip or two along the way!

Brigham Young University – Family History and Genealogy Courses include Introductory (Introduction to Family History Research; Writing Family History; Helping Children Love Your Family History), Record Type (Family Records; Vital Records; Military Records), and Regional and Ethnic (French Research; German Research; Huguenot Research; Scandinavian Research).

Genealogy.com – Courses in Beginning Genealogy, Internet Genealogy, Tracing Immigrant Origins, and Researching with Genealogy.com.

Introduction to Genealogy – Lesson Topics: Genealogical Basics, Family & Home sources, Genealogy Research 101, Vital Records – Birth, Marriage, Death, Divorce

Research Courses – Lots of courses for worldwide research (Italian, Irish, Australian, English, German, Polish and others) as well as a great array of topics including U.S. Courthouse Research, Reading Handwritten Records, Cemetery Art, Locating and Using Maps in Your Research, How to Find More at a Genealogy Library, Beginner Genealogy Mistakes, and many more! If you do not like the video presentation (slide show), you can get the course content by selecting the course handout.

## Upcoming Reunions

Saturday, May 21 – **Spence Family Reunion**, 10:00 AM at the Community Center in DeFuniak Springs. No contact information has been submitted.

Saturday, June 4 – **Evans/Lindsey/Brown Family Reunion**, 10:00 AM in the Euchee Valley Community Center. For more information, call Carolyn Brown at 892-9267.

Saturday, June 11 – **Cosson Family Reunion** at the Harry Cosson home in Alaqua. No contact information has been submitted.

Saturday, June 11 – **Nelson Family Reunion**, 10:00 AM at the DeFuniak Springs Community Center. For more information, call Marie Rhodes at 892-5255.

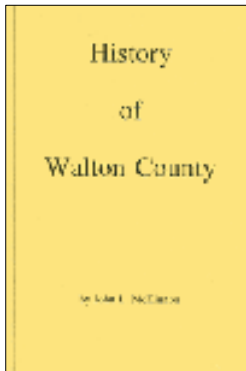
Saturday, July 23 – **Slay Family Reunion** at the Community Center on Hwy. 83 in DeFuniak Springs. For more information, contact Ron and June Slay at 352-793-7320 or [RonSlay@sum.net](mailto:RonSlay@sum.net) or [JuneSlay@embarqmail.com](mailto:JuneSlay@embarqmail.com).

Sunday, September 11 – **Weimorts Family Reunion**. No contact information has been submitted.

Saturday, November 5 – **Donaldson Family Reunion** at the Steele Church in Alaqua. No contact information has been submitted.

Please send your reunion information to Wayne Sconiers at [WayneSconiers@embarqmail.com](mailto:WayneSconiers@embarqmail.com).

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### *History of Walton County* by John L. McKinnon

When I moved to Walton County from Virginia seventeen years ago, the first book I read was John L. McKinnon's *History of Walton County* because I wanted to learn about the history of my new home. Over the years, many people have mentioned errors in that book. I need to read it again because I think it will be more meaningful now, but I am not confident I will catch the mistakes. Since it is the only book that covers the early history of the county in a narrative form, I would like to prepare a booklet of corrections to the book. If you have suggestions for corrections, please contact me at [WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net](mailto:WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net).

~ Diane Merkel

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[www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org](http://www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org)

*Walton Relations* is a publication of the Walton County Genealogy Society. Wayne Sconiers, President. Distribution is encouraged! For more information or to submit an article, please email its editor, Diane Merkel, at [WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net](mailto:WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net) or call 850-897-4505.